THE BRITISH EMPIRE

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A REMOTE ELITE
Anglo-Indians at Work and Play

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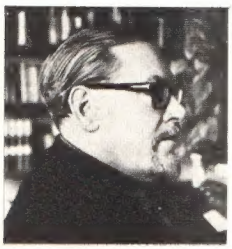

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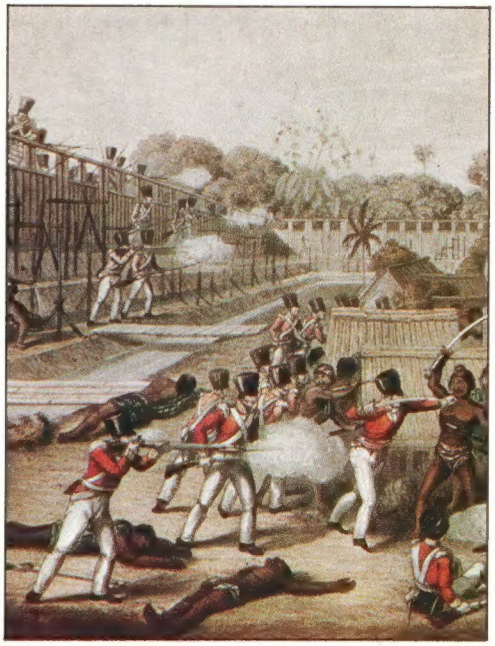
No. 33. The Mystique of Empire. In the 1880s, the imperial concept – a strange combination of idealism, arrogance and superficial patriotism – acquired wide popularity.



No. 34. Enlarging the Jewel. From India, the British extended their interest to Burma, whose King apparently threatened Bengal, and the island of Ceylon.

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The self-righteousness of the British in India, reinforced by the attitudes of the memsahib, leads to a growing separation between the races.

Cover: British officers adopt a suitably formal pose for this record of themselves, complete with elephant and servant in a thoroughly Indian setting.

A REMOTE ELITE

After the 1857 Mutiny, the government in London uncertainly assumed the task of taming the savage passions revealed by the revolt. Few in London relished the task, as the above cartoon shows. Prime Minister Palmerston, peering at a threatening India, tethered by Sir Campbell, victor of the Mutiny, expresses his thanks and adds doubtfully: "But how about keeping the brute?"

"The brute" was to be kept by Anglo-Indian administrators determined on successful, peaceful and prosperous rule. They performed miracles of construction that laid the foundations of modern India, contributions discussed in detail elsewhere in this history, but as they did so they created for themselves an enclosed world consciously designed to separate the rulers and the ruled ❧

By Michael Edwardes

After the shock of the Indian Mutiny of 1857, the British, who deeply resented what they believed to have been a betrayal of trust, withdrew more and more into a world of their own. Never again would an Indian – Hindu or Muslim – really be trusted, for the Indians' loyalty had been taken so much for granted that their British officers had faith in it until the moment when they were shot down by their own men.

The armed forces were completely reorganized so that the fire-power was controlled by the white troops. In the civil service, even the most highly Westernized Indians were barred from the upper levels – despite Victoria's proclamation of 1858 which stated all her subjects should be "impartially admitted to Offices in Our Service."

Most of the British in post-Mutiny India accepted such discrimination without question. For the first time in the history of their rule, all the British – administrators and soldiers, businessmen and planters – felt an overwhelming sense of racial solidarity, of belonging to a caste, which was (it went without saying) the highest one of all.

Throughout the rest of the 19th Century, this was an attitude that was to increase in strength. The high-minded self-righteousness of India's hard-working official guardians, the blatant prejudices of the business community, the continual need (felt especially by the memsahibs) to escape from the India of inefficient servants and depressing heat, the small, introverted social world that evolved as a result – all this was to create a widening gap between rulers and ruled.

Government administrators, especially, were imbued by a sense of caste, but one tempered by a rare dedication to duty. After the Mutiny, it was decided that the British had been caught by surprise because British officials had been out of touch with the people. The reaction was to create a more personal and direct system of administration.

Now there was to be a British official in every district with responsibility for the maintenance of peace. Gone was the pre-Mutiny belief that British civilization should be the model for India. The great reforms, the militant Christianity

A Darjeeling Railway train carries tea and passengers 7,000 feet up into the Himalayas. This was the highest point in the 30,000 miles of track that, by the end of the 19th Century, had transformed India economically and socially.

Peasants in Bihar, north-west India, prepare indigo leaves for the extraction of indigo dye. The treatment of these peasants, shackled to intolerant planter-landlords by a feudal system of land tenure, was a constant bone of contention between planters and more liberal local officials.

of the first half of the century had led only to revolt. The administrators, though as high-minded as ever, saw their Christian duty in a new light. Their aim was now to keep the peace, maintain law and order, bring India some of the material blessings of Europe, and not to worry about the Indians' family life or private morals. In return, nothing was expected except "the blame of those ye better, the hate of those ye guard." This was quite acceptable. Duty was a hard taskmaster, and satisfaction lay in the approval of one's own kind.

This somewhat stern appraisal of the British purpose was certainly not shared by the non-official community – an increasingly strong one – whose feelings of difference were rather more coarsely straightforward. The Crown, now ruling India directly, reversed the East India Company's policy and encouraged Europeans to live and work in India. The larger the European population, it was thought, the safer the régime would be. In the 1860s, a flood of Englishmen arrived in India – to plant coffee and tea, to build railways and cotton-mills – and they brought with them attitudes that had been influenced by the wave of anti-Indian feeling that had passed over Britain at the time of the Mutiny.

Generally speaking, these new men, and particularly their wives, viewed India only as a place to make money in. They had no interest in learning anything about Indians, who were, to them, simply dangerous and dirty. These views were displayed in the English-language Press, virulently, and with undisguised racialism. The British in India demanded from the government laws with which to coerce the Indians they employed, packed juries to protect their fellow countrymen from laws that would otherwise have condemned them, and suspected most government officials of being nigger-lovers.

Though the crude racialism of the British non-official community was occasionally reflected in services newly created after the Mutiny – such as the police force – the government nevertheless remained a moderating influence.

In some areas the behaviour of European planters was often an incitement to rebellion, and in such circumstances the government was forced to take the side of the Indian. Fortunately, the planters were mainly confined to the indigo-growing areas of Bengal and Bihar, the coffee-growing districts of the Nilgiris in south India, and the tea-gardens of Assam.

Elsewhere the European did not penetrate the countryside, and the District Officer was almost on his own in a world graphically described by the historian George Otto Trevelyan:

"Here is Tom, in his thirty-first year, in charge of a population as numerous as that of England in the reign of Elizabeth," his aides "a magistrate of eight-and-twenty" and "an assistant magistrate who took his degree at Christ Church within the last fifteen months. These, with two or three superintendents of police, and, last but by no means least, a judge, who in rank and amount of salary stands to Tom in the position which the Lord Chancellor holds to the Prime Minister, are the only English officials in a province one hundred and twenty miles by seventy."

Tom, according to Trevelyan, is all-powerful in his district, or very nearly so. Above him there is a senior official, and beyond, the secretariat and the Governor, but they are a very long way off.

Tom's day is a very full one. In the hot weather, "he rises at daybreak, and goes straight from his bed to the saddle. Then off he gallops across fields bright with dew to visit the scene of the late *dacoit* [bandit] robbery; or to see with his own eyes whether the crops of the *zemindar* [landlord] who is so unpunctual with his assessment have really failed; or to watch with fond parental care the progress of his pet embankment."

Two or three times a month the routine will be broken by a run with the "hounds," a motley pack made up of dogs of assorted breeds or of no breed at all. "They probably start a jackal, who gives them a sharp run for ten minutes and takes refuge in a patch of sugar-cane; whence he steals away in safety while the pack are occupied in mobbing a fresh fox and a brace of wolfcubs, to the delight of a remarkably full field of five sportsmen with one pair of top boots among

During the hot weather, even the relative cool of night was a misery for those British residents unable to escape to the hills. The discomforts of such a night are portrayed in the scene below, which, like the other views on this page, comes from a picture-and-caption series about daily life in India by an Army captain, George Atkinson. "We gaze at the superpending punkah" he comments, "we simmer and accidentally sleep just as . . . it is the hour to get up."

"Our magistrate," wrote Atkinson, his words reflecting the racialist attitudes of British India, "is as zealous a man as ever imprisoned a nigger, and the district is ably cared for under his guidance. . . . At this early hour . . . you see him directing the metalling of the roads."

"A worthy divine of the *Ancien Régime* is 'Our Padre.' He considers that the duties of the pastor may well be enlivened by the sports of the field; and that creeds and confectionery, doctrines and devilled kidneys, spirituality and sociability, may consistently run hand in hand."

"A 'Burrah Khanah,' literally a grand feed. But these grand spreads are cruelly ponderous, and indigestible to the feelings – that stifling room, with the incense of savoury meats hanging about like a London fog, which the punkah fails to disperse. . . . But then the punkah has to be stopped to undergo reparation; and frantic and awful is the heat." .....

them." But this is only the curtain-raiser to the real business of the day.

After a quick bath and a meal of tea and toast, the administration of the Empire must be attended to. Seated on the veranda of his bungalow, Tom "works through the contents of one despatch box . . . after another; signing orders, and passing them on . . . dashing through drafts, to be filled up by his subordinates; writing reports, minutes, digests, letters of explanation, of remonstrance, of warning, of commendation." There was an immense amount of paper work in this new Empire, so much so that at the end of the century a reforming Viceroy was to cry out that the system had "seated itself like the Old Man of the Sea upon the shoulders of the Indian government, and every man accepts, while deploring, the burden."

For the District Officer there was always the problem of interruptions. The area round his bungalow would at all times be full of men hoping for employment, carrying complaints, offering petitions. Access to the official was controlled by a *chuprassy*, a kind of office messenger who was frequently also "the mother-in-law of liars . . . and the receiver-general of bribes."

Even in the countryside where the British official was nearer to the people than anywhere else in India, there always had to be an intermediary between them. However paternal a civil servant might be, he had to remain aloof and therefore to a large extent dependent on his Indian subordinates. The *chuprassy* sat on his master's veranda, and "no native visitor dare approach who has not conciliated him with money. The candidate for employment, educated in our schools, and pregnant with words about purity, equality, justice . . . and all the rest of it, addresses him with joined hands as 'Maharaj,' and slips silver into his itching palm. The successful place-hunter pays him a feudal relief on receiving office or promotion, and benevolences flow in from all who have anything to hope or fear from his power."

The rest of Tom's day, after a lunch of "fried fish, curried fowl, roast kid and mint sauce, and mango-fool," was spent in deciding upon questions of land and revenue, much of the evidence for which

had been faked by the clients of his *chuprassy*. The corruption of his servants was occasionally exposed, for a shrewd District Officer was not always taken in.

During the cold season, the District Officer would take his tents and tour his domain. After "examining schools, and inspecting infirmaries, and quarrelling about the sites of bridges with the superintending engineer in the Public Works department," he would ride out with a gun to get a bird for the pot, while his servants moved the tents to the next camping-place. And how pleasant it was to "reach the rendezvous in the gloaming, rather tired and dusty, to find your tents pitched and your soup and curry within a few minutes of perfection, and your servant with a bottle of lemonade . . . and the head man of the village ready with his report of a deadly affray that would have taken place if you had come in a day later."

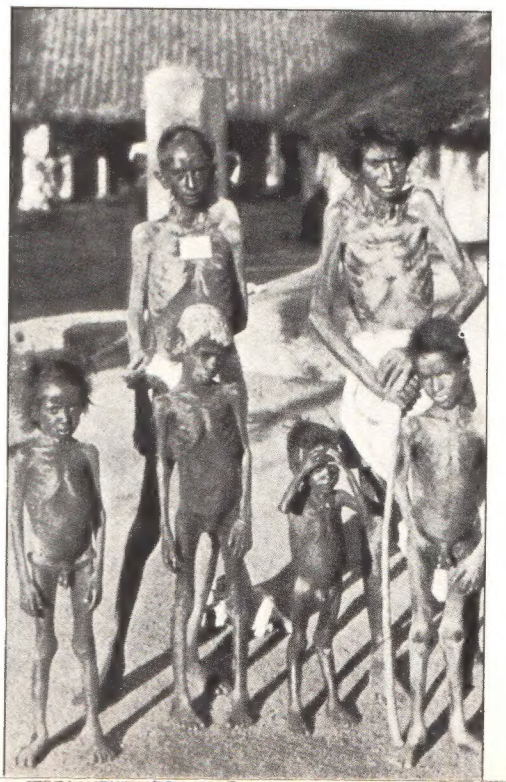
If such a life sounds idyllic, at times it was. But there were always tensions of one kind or another even in the quietest district. In areas that had suffered during the Mutiny, memories of its horror died slowly. In districts where a number of Europeans lived, the men were almost certainly members of a force of volunteer cavalry, for there was little faith in the government's security measures. Thirty years after the Mutiny had been suppressed, the planters of Bihar were still agitating for a chain of forts. One wrote: "Have we again lapsed into that deadly feeling of security . . . which preceded the Mutiny and its horrors? Are we to disregard all due precaution and to be in jeopardy even to the eleventh hour, because the sky is clear and all seems tranquil around us? . . . We are not pessimists – all we would urge is that we are a small handful of British folk in a foreign land, amongst the teeming populations of which, with friendship is mixed up hate, and fairness fanaticism, and with justice intolerance."

The government did not respond to appeals like this one because it believed there were better methods of preserving the peace. The Mutiny had taught the British that a rebellion fed on discontent. It was not enough, however, simply to stop interfering in religious matters. A contented peasantry was the best safeguard, and there seemed no better way to ensure this than by bringing material benefits to as many people as possible.

At first, it was thought sufficient to build bridges, keep irrigation ditches in good repair, and roads in a reasonable state. This was about all that Indian finances, shattered after the Mutiny, could safely stand. But the viceregal government was also inhibited from doing more by the Victorian belief in self-help. If too much was done for the populace by the government, ran the thought, the people would lose the ambition to do something for themselves.

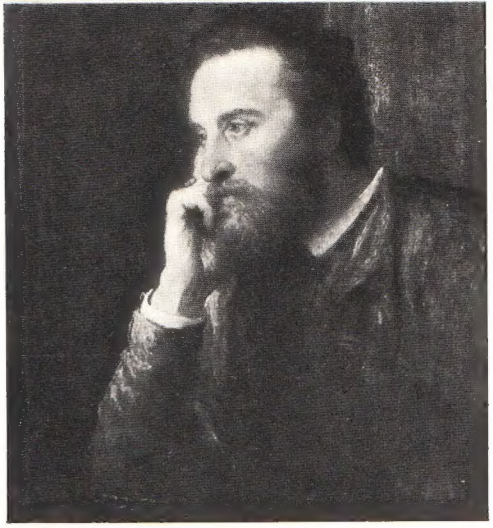
No one, however, could expect the peasants to design and dig canals and erect vast irrigation works, the most likely agents for agricultural prosperity. This was the government's job, and by the end of the century it had constructed some 13,000 miles of canals to irrigate 23 million acres of land.

These vast works were not unprofitable. Water had to be paid for, and there was increased revenue from new land brought into cultivation. But digging canals took time, and not every part of the vast country could be served by them. For most of the second half of the 19th Century, the majority of India's peasants were dependent for their crops on the fickle monsoon rains. In India, nine-tenths of the annual rainfall comes in the months of July, August and September, when the rain-carrying winds of the south-west and south-east monsoons strike the coasts of India and move slowly across the country to meet each other. In



Emaciated peasants, living on government food, testify to the partial success of the Famine Code, enacted in 1883 after a series of devastating famines in the 1870s had killed over five million people.

Starving men and women scrabble in the dust for precious scraps of food as a grain-laden bullock-cart supervised by a British soldier makes its way to a relief centre during a famine in the 1880s.



Lord Lytton, Viceroy and – under the pen-name of Owen Meredith – minor poet, initiated famine control by intensifying the construction of canals and railways to transport grain across the sub-continent.

a good year, when the two monsoons meet in the middle of the country, everyone has rain, the land bursts into life, and two crops can be harvested. But if the monsoons fail to meet, central and northern India turn slowly into a desert. Without rain, the rice and millet cannot be gathered in September as they should be, nor can the hard ground be broken and ploughed to take the wheat and barley that should be harvested in March.

The peasant had little extra margin to life, no more perhaps than enough grain to last him a month or two. With difficulty, he might survive in near-starvation the results of one year's failure. But two lean years meant that stocks were exhausted and there was famine in the land.

Before 1858 the British had attacked famine with economic theories and charity. Good capitalists, they believed in the law of supply and demand. If there was a shortage in one place, the natural process of profit-making would move food from somewhere else.

But as long as there were no adequate means of transportation, this "law" failed to operate. Even where transport existed, merchants had a distressing habit of hanging on to their stocks in the hope that prices would rise.

During a serious famine in eastern India in 1866–67, the government became aware of this technique of hoarding and it moved to end the artificial shortages, but far too late, and over a million died. Another famine the following year was faced more successfully, and the principle was accepted that the need to prevent starvation must guide official action.

Though action was delayed by the fear that relief might "check the growth of thrift and self-reliance among the people," by 1880 the government had decided that it must establish some kind of machinery for dealing with famine and its consequences. This was not only a matter of common humanity but sound policy. In that year the government set up a commission of inquiry, and the result was the establishment of a Famine Code, the first acknowledgement by any modern state of responsibility for the welfare of those it ruled.

Protective railways were built – lines with little possibility of commercial profit but which could be used to transport supplies of food to places of shortage. Plans were drawn up for relief work that would pay wages fixed according to need and at which food would be sold in special shops at fixed prices. At work sites there were also to be hospitals and doctors, as well as simple accommodation for the worker and his family. In addition, the Code provided for the remission of land-taxes and the free distribution of seed for the next planting.

With the help of the Famine Code and other acts designed to protect the peasant, the government hoped to exact from the masses, if not loyalty, at least neutrality in any conflict between it and the Indian middle classes. For it was educated Indians – and their British protagonists at home – who were both feared and despised by the British in India, more as a potential than an imminent threat.

It would have been difficult to find anyone in the British community in India, either official or non-official, to take exception to the opinion of the Indian middle classes expressed by the Viceroy, Lord Lytton, in 1877: "The only political representatives of native opinion are the Baboos, whom we have educated to write semi-seditious articles in the native Press, and who really represent nothing but the social anomaly of their own position."

The basically inoffensive word "baboo" had achieved a special place in the vocabulary of racialism. Originally it had been a term of respect, and then it became a name for a native clerk who spoke English. But with the expansion of schools and universities after the Mutiny, it was applied indiscriminately to any educated Indian and, in particular, to the Bengali, who had been the first to benefit from English education. The baboo was the victim of much of the cruel humour of Anglo-Indian satirists. "When I was at Lhasa," wrote one, "the Dalai Lama told me that a virtuous cow-hippopotamus by

continued on p. 878

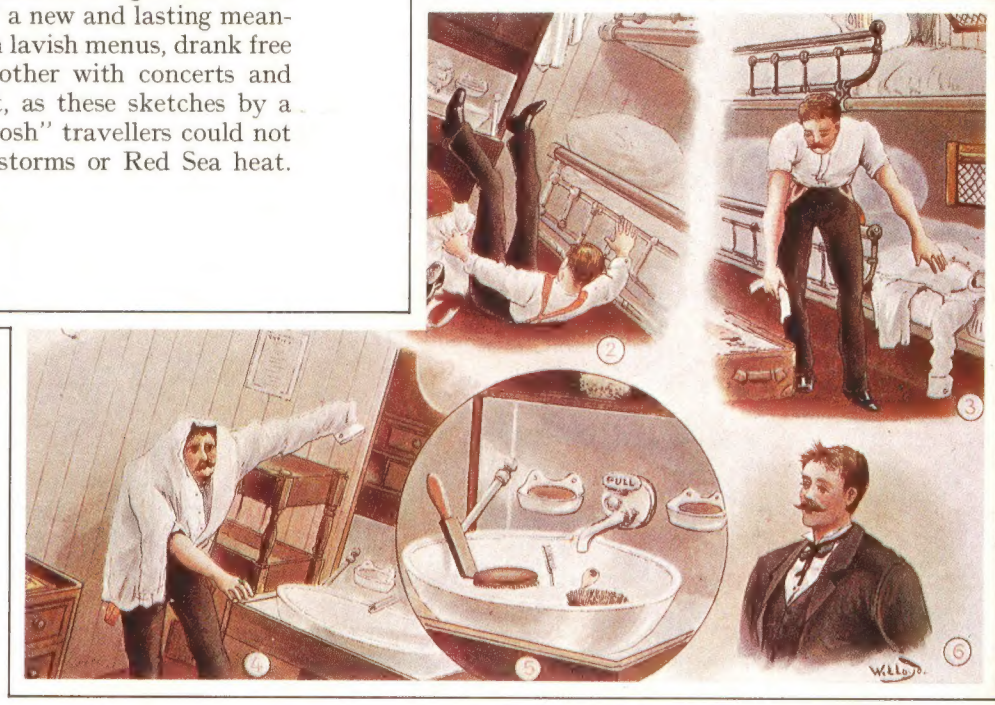
POSH

Port Out, Starboard Home.

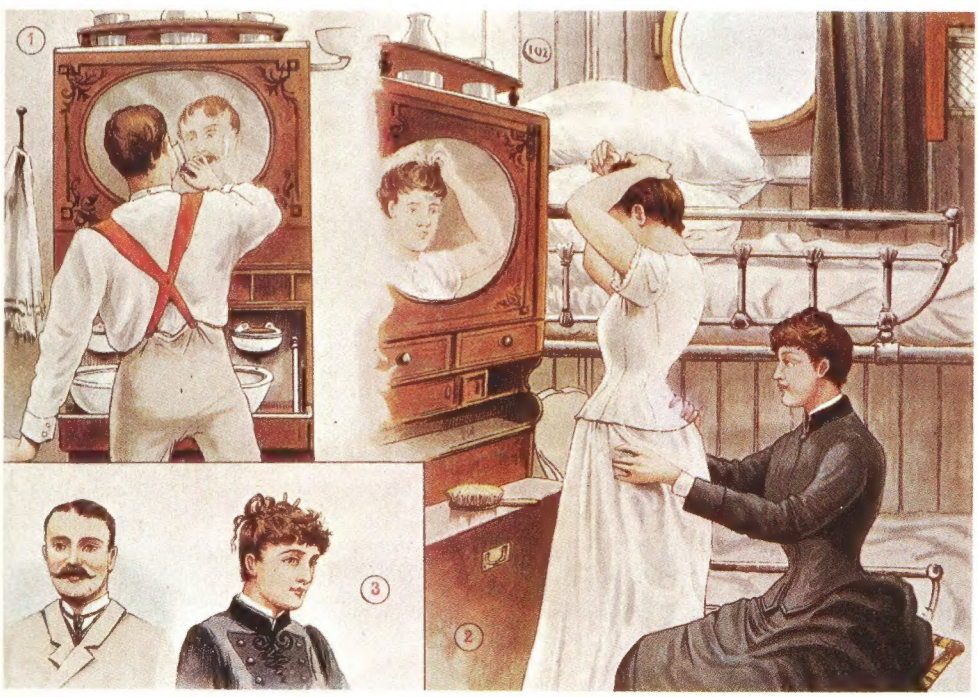
The opening of the Suez Canal revolutionized travel to the Eastern Empire. Gone was the tedious four-month voyage via Cape Town: now for the same £100 fare administrators and merchants could be in India in under three weeks, and travel First Class into the bargain. The most affluent reserved north-facing cabins on both legs of the journey – "port out, starboard home" – to avoid the Equatorial sun, and the happy coincidence of letters – P.O.S.H. – used to locate these cabins gave the word "posh," originally slang for "money," a new and lasting meaning. The well-to-do ordered meals from lavish menus, drank free wines and spirits, entertained each other with concerts and devised shipboard games galore. But, as these sketches by a passenger in the 1890s show, even "posh" travellers could not totally escape the rigours of Biscay storms or Red Sea heat.

The Captain sets a breakfast guest at ease.

Journey's start at Tilbury: the latest arrival checks his cabin with the steward amidst bustling preparations for departure.

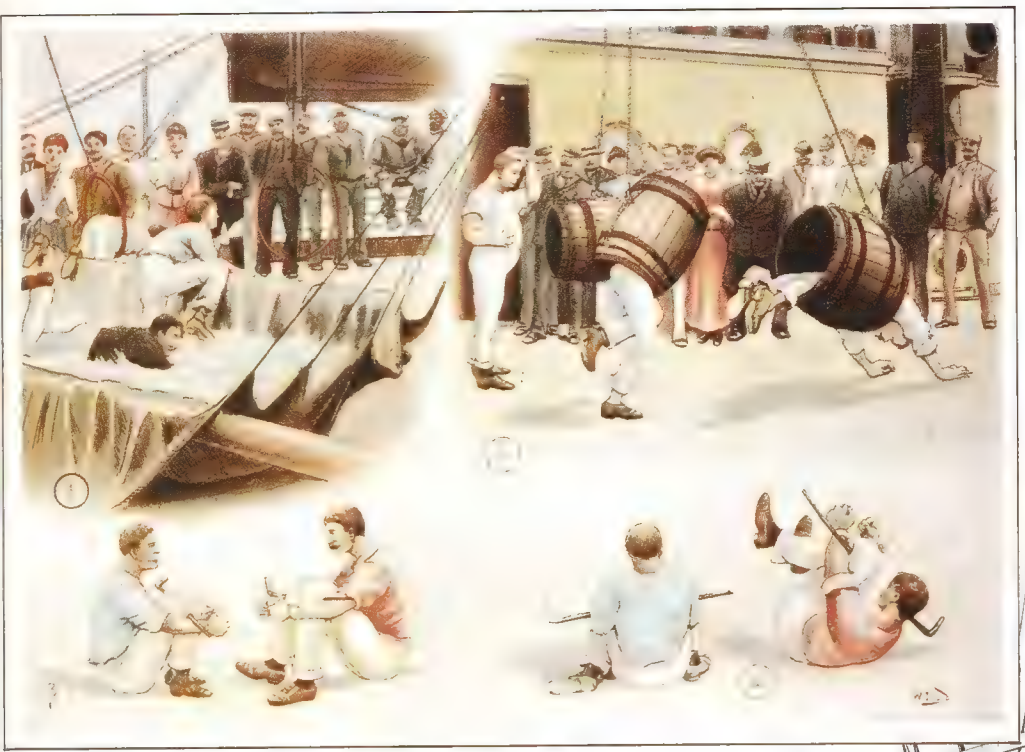


Pitched about by a choppy sea, an aspiring young bachelor utterly fails to master shirt, collar, tie, hair-brushes and soap.



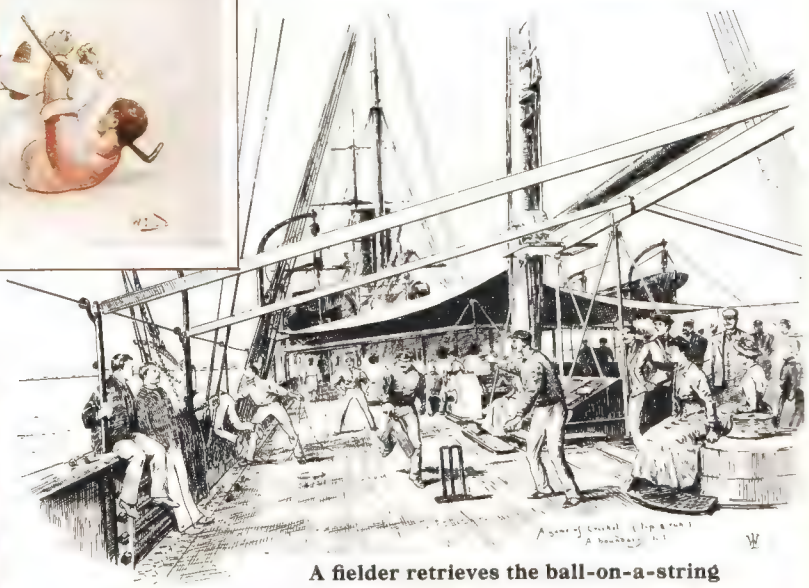
Even a still day – and, for madam, a maid's steadying hand – cannot guarantee a gash-free shave or an unruffled hair-do.

A shipboard Sunday: the saloon's whist, bezique, cigars and drink give way to the universal ritual of Victorian piety.



The energetic exhaust themselves in obstacle races and "cock-fighting," with each man trying to overbalance his opponent.

A musical evening adds a touch of home.



A fielder retrieves the ball-on-a-string during a vigorous game of deck cricket.

Serious talk in the smoking-room underlines the ponderous gentility of First Class travellers.

"Posh" passengers take advantage of a cooling breeze, while below decks Bengali firemen stoke the blistering furnaces.

metempsychosis might, under favourable circumstances, become a graduate of Calcutta University, and that, when patent-leather shoes and English supervened, the thing was a Baboo."

Particularly amusing to the humorists was the baboo's misuse of English. Everybody could provide examples as good as "Simpson and Delilah" and "Mr. Monty Cristo," and it was not difficult to suggest an original for the character in a novel who, on being offered the alternative of a duel or a thrashing, "wept to find himself between a deep sea and the devil of a kicking," but "accepted the challenge, feeling like Imperial Caesar, when he found himself compelled to climb up a rubicon after having burnt his boots."

Behind the laughter lurked dislike and even fear. The British image of a "good" Indian was usually that of a somewhat wayward child, in need only of a little fatherly correction to keep him on the right path. All that was asked in return was a proper understanding of his position in the scheme of things, and that he should get out of his master's way, humbly touching his forelock.

The educated Indian, however, would not keep his place. He was always questioning the decisions of his betters, who, most Englishmen believed, belonged to "a race whom God has destined to govern and subdue." It did not matter how well educated or clever an Indian might be, the governing caste would never consider him as an equal.

In the view of Anglo-Indians, native restlessness was all the fault of the government for giving the natives an English education in the first place. It was producing a kind of Frankenstein monster. Government schools inspired Indians to try for scholarships to better schools and then to universities. All graduates expected government jobs as a right. And would they stop at that? What was now thought to be laughable – "the patent-leather shoes, the silk umbrella, the ten-thousand horsepower English words and phrases, and the loose shadows of English thought" – could well turn into sedition. In fact, on all grounds, whether of race, satire, or security, the baboo had to be kept in his place.

Unfortunately, since the Mutiny India had become the direct responsibility of the British Crown, and that meant supervision by the British Parliament. Especially after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, Members of Parliament frequently travelled out to India, making themselves a nuisance while they were there, and even more so when they returned home and aired their ignorant views in the House of Commons. That, at least, was how their fellow countrymen in India saw them. "Mr. Cox, the member of parliament – perhaps you remember him," wrote one Anglo-Indian bitterly, "A little red-haired fellow, was he, who wrote a book about India on the back of his two-monthly return ticket?"

This sketch recalls the amorous adventures supposedly offered to young officers by women in Simla, the Himalayan town where Society spent the hot weather months.

Almost inevitably, it seemed, these travelling M.P.s wrote a book or an article for the influential journal, *The Nineteenth Century*, so that a man whose "ignorance and information leave two broad streaks of laughter in his wake is turned loose upon the reading public. Upon my word, I believe the reading public would do better to go and sit at the feet of Baboo Sillabub Thunder Ghosht, B.A."

Nevertheless, British Members of Parliament were always asking why "Baboo Ghosht" was not employed on the higher levels of the civil service. Queen Victoria's proclamation of 1858 had made it quite clear that there was to be no racial discrimination in her Empire. No one objected to the employment of Indians in the lower ranks of the administration – in fact, without them the British would not have been able to govern – but it was generally felt that the Queen's generosity did not reach as far as the sacred ranks of the Indian Civil Service. Indians were not excluded outright from taking the competitive examination – but they could only take it in London, a voyage too costly for all but a few Indians. When four Indians did pass in 1869 and seven candidates turned up in the following year, the government decided to make things even more difficult for them by reducing the maximum age for candidates from 21 to 19. In 1880 there were only two qualified Indian candidates.

Even those Indians who made the grade found themselves treated very differently from their British colleagues. Minor errors of judgment or even of administrative procedure that were overlooked in a British member of the I.C.S. were punished in an Indian. In 1874, one of the first Indians to join the service was dismissed for an action which would have meant no more than a departmental reprimand for one of his white colleagues. The man concerned, Surendranath Banerjea, took his case to London but failed to get justice, and returned to India convinced that "the personal wrong to me was an illustration of the impotency of our people." He was determined to dedicate the rest of his life to "redressing our wrongs and protecting our rights, personal and collective."

In 1876 Banerjea was one of the founders of the first all-India political organization, the Indian Association. The Association agitated against discrimination in the civil service, against the Vernacular Press Act of 1878, which restricted Indian-language newspapers, and the removal of import duties on Lancashire cottons, which allowed them to be sold cheaper, undercutting Indian goods. The British business community in Calcutta particularly resented the Association, and in 1880, after the Liberals came to power in Britain, that resentment was reinforced by anxiety. For the Liberals were alleged to favour Indians, and there was no knowing

Simla's parish church and the oddly varied English styles of the buildings emphasize the town's isolation from the "real India."

what a Liberal Viceroy might get up to.

Yet on the surface at least, the business community had nothing to fear. It knew that even a Liberal government was unlikely to give up India to the Indians. But fear there was; the least concession, it was felt, especially to "educated" Indians, meant the erosion of those socio-economic privileges that the British so carefully preserved.

The Mecca of Anglo-Indian society was the administrative capital, Calcutta. In spite of the discomforts of the Indian climate and the presence of deadly diseases – for which at that time there was neither prevention nor cure – the British resident in Calcutta generally enjoyed a far better standard of living than he could have hoped for in Britain.

Wealthy men lived in the great houses that had been built at the end of the 18th century – Palladian mansions requiring an army of servants. Others, not so well off, lived in bungalows, while the bachelors usually shared a house and its servants. The men – lawyers, merchants and bankers – in the main spent busy days at their offices, but there was always plenty of time for that social round which is the cement that binds a small expatriate community together.

It was still the custom for the English to take the air in the evening in Calcutta's Eden Gardens, to listen to the music of a regimental band, perhaps, but mainly to see and be seen. In the cold weather when the Viceroy was in residence and the Calcutta season in full swing, there were balls and dances almost every night. Such official and semi-official occasions were rarely meetings together of equals, for the British in India had their class divisions. Indeed, the government published a "warrant of precedence" with the Viceroy at the top and the Sub-Deputy Opium Agent at the bottom. The position of non-governmental people was not defined, but considered low.

During the hot season, the Viceroy and his high government officials made their way to the hill station of Simla. Only the most important of the business and trading community followed the Viceroy to the summer capital of the Raj. The commercial or professional Englishman preferred the company of his own kind at other hill stations, when he was able to leave the plains. But regardless of where they went, as many Englishmen as possible tried to get away, and in doing so emphasized the remoteness of that élite that ruled India.

Throughout the hot season, the whole decision-making apparatus was concentrated on a ridge in the Himalayas, after having travelled a thousand miles from Calcutta to get there. Simla was cut off from the plains by 58 miles of indifferent road, and frequently the telegraph-lines were broken by landslides. Other hill stations were even more isolated. Indeed, this remoteness was an important element in the attraction of such places.

Not only was the climate clean and bracing after the muggy heat of the plains, but in the hills the British could pretend that they were not in India at all but in a kind of simulated "Home." Simla, it was said, looked like parts of Surrey with touches of Tibet – the latter an unavoidable, but hardly oppressive aspect of this most important of hill stations. In the hills the British could, and did, live very differently from the way they did in the plains. They could forget that they were imperialists, and enjoy themselves.

Simla had a reputation for being "fast" and this was partly well deserved, though most of the juicier stories were originated by people who were not members of Simla "society." Undeniably, most of the women at Simla were as chaste as any heroine of a Victorian novel, but quite a number were just as certainly not. Young girls were constantly warned of the pitfalls of this Olympus of imperialism –

the most sinister being "amateur theatricals and military men on leave."

Of course, the town had its defenders. One suggested that its reputation was all the fault of the newspaper correspondents who followed the imperial government to its summer residence. Finding themselves short of copy, there was little for them to write about but "the gaieties of the place; and so the balls and picnics, the croquet and badminton parties, the flirtations and the rumoured engagements, are given an importance which they do not actually possess." Those British not in government employ, confined in quieter and duller hill stations, preferred to believe the worst, thus strengthening their generalized dislike of the civil service.

Not everyone would spend the whole of the hot season in the cool hills. The Viceroy could, of course, and so could senior members of the government and many of the women and children, but most of the men, whether in the services or not, could only afford a short time away from their everyday work. The hot weather, particularly in a city as unhealthy as Calcutta, could fray tempers to breaking point. Inside the houses, the air would press down heavily, moved sluggishly by a punkah, a kind of swinging fan attached to the roof and pulled by a servant who was always going off to sleep.

Some Europeans, however, were fortunate enough to have a thermantidote. This was an enormous machine made of wood, about seven feet high, four or five feet wide, and between nine and twelve feet long. It was hollow, and circular in shape, ending in a funnel which was fixed to the window of the house. Inside the cylinder there were four large fans, fixed to an axle that was driven from outside. When the fans revolved, air was driven into the house through a circle about four feet in diameter cut out of each side of the thermantidote and filled with a mat made of grass called *khas-khas*. This gave off a fragrant smell when wet, and the thermantidote thus produced a current of sweet-smelling, cool air. The mats were kept wet by means of a perforated trough above, which it was a servant's duty to keep filled with water.

The thermantidote and the punkah gave some relief inside the house, but work had to be done outside as well. An early morning ride punctuated by the harrowing cry of the aptly named "brain-fever bird" would be followed by a short stay at the office. By noon it was time for a siesta. Outside in the streets, the white sunlight laid upon the roads "so palpable a heat that it might be peeled off: the bare, blinding walls, surcharged with heat, refuse to soak in more, and reject upon the air the fervour beating down upon them. In the dusty hollows of the roadside the pariah dogs lie sweltering. . . . Beneath the trees sit the crows, their beaks agape . . . but not a human being is abroad of his own will."

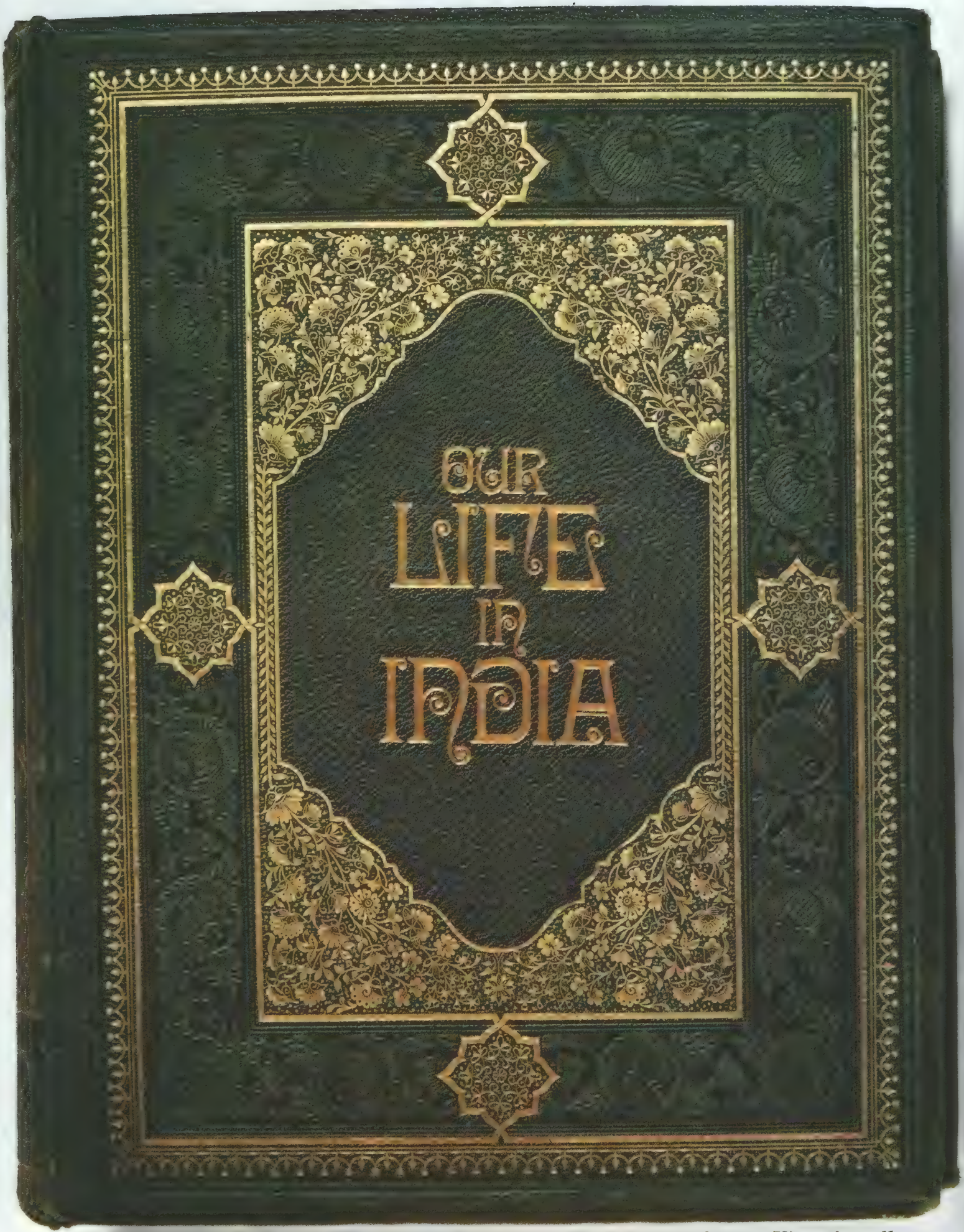
In the hot weather, cholera made its annual visitation and took its toll of Indians and British alike. Death was always near, not only from disease, but from suicide as well. "As June drew nigh," one long-time Anglo-Indian recalled, "we all, civilians and military, gathered together to undergo our annual season of mourning. . . . Only too many of my European acquaintances in India have died by their own hands, and I do not remember a single case where a motive could be assigned; always the deed was done in response to the muttered promptings of that *nescio quid doloris* [unknown sorrow] which lurks in our souls. . . . At the foot of the hills is one of those little graveyards, more than sufficiently abundant, in which the dreams of youth have ended. For they are dedicated mainly to the young . . . forgotten workers upon the vast, frail edifice of empire."

But there were also many minor afflictions to try the body. One of the most irritating was prickly heat, a kind of rash that one sufferer could only compare with "lying in a state of nudity on a horse-hair sofa, rather worn, and with the prickles of horse-hair very much exposed, and with other horse-hair sofas above you, and all round, tucking you in. Sitting on thorns would be agreeable by comparison, the infliction in that case being local; now not a square inch of your body but is tingling and smarting with shooting pains, till you begin to imagine that in your youth you *must* have swallowed a packet of needles, which now oppressed by heat are endeavouring to make their escape from your interior, where they find themselves smothered in this hot weather." There was no cure and very little alleviation for this disease.

In these gruelling conditions, the British made their exile comfortable by the erection of ghettoes of both the mind and the body and thus created the apartheid of colonialism. They sustained their sense of superiority with prejudices essentially racial in origin. From necessary contact with the real world of the India they ruled – a world full of superstitious, dirty and seditious Indians – the administrator could retire into the security of an expatriate society. The counterpart to official involvement with India was private withdrawal into a simulacrum of "Home." The distinctive features of this particular Englishman's castle – and of the view from the battlements – were to a large extent the creation of the "memsahib," the Englishwoman.

The memsahib's India was a very small country, confined mainly to the European quarter of the larger cities and, elsewhere, to what were known as the "Civil Lines" or the "Military Cantonment." The frontiers of this special nation were defended as strongly as possible against the world outside by the barbed-wire of prejudice. Some contact with India was unavoidable, for British administrators and soldiers seldom stayed in one place for any length of time. But the move, when it had to be made, was always to another ghetto, which looked very much the same as all the others and was inhabited by one's own kind.

The men, in the course of their imperial business, met all kinds of Indians. Some claimed intimate friendship with members of the Indian traditional élite, the rajahs and landowners, and many cultured paternal feelings for the hard-working peasant, but there was little or no social mixing. The women did not approve of it, and after the Mutiny of 1857 few of the men did either. "Your ladies," said one Indian indignantly, "look upon me as something of a wild beast, and you yourself perhaps grow a little brutal after your third glass of sherry." The memsahib's opinion of Indians was almost entirely the product of sexual fears, highly coloured interpretations of Indian religious and social practices, and the regrettably unavoidable task of dealing with servants



Leaves from a Victorian album . . .

The Call of Duty

After the Mutiny, the English in India increasingly lost touch with the land they administered. Shocked by the violence that had resulted from the East India Company reforms in the first half of the century, India's administrators saw it as their duty not to change native society but to govern well from above.

The capable administrators of the Indian Civil Service and enthusiastic young Army officers were zealous in preserving the peace and reforming public services, but they remained aloof. Their games, fashions and hobbies were so emphatically British that only the exotic Indian setting betrayed their true location. Preserved in the gilt-embossed albums of thousands of English families, faded photographs like these evoke a picture of how Anglo-Indians saw themselves. In their self-conscious formality, they reflect the unquestioning British acceptance of their own superiority.

A Maxim-gun detachment poses like some varsity sports team before action against a rising in the North-West.

This amateur astronomer in uniform assumes a studied posture to get a daylight record of his night-time hobby.

An officer with his dog present a scene inseparably associated with the British in India.

Nonchalant officers gather round an elephant with an informality that indicates as much ease with elephants as with horses.

The winning of a polo cup – like the one shown off here by the team of the 18th Bengal Lancers – added enormously to a regiment's prestige.

Members of an Army punitive expedition on the North-West Frontier survey the terrain before taking on a dissident tribe.

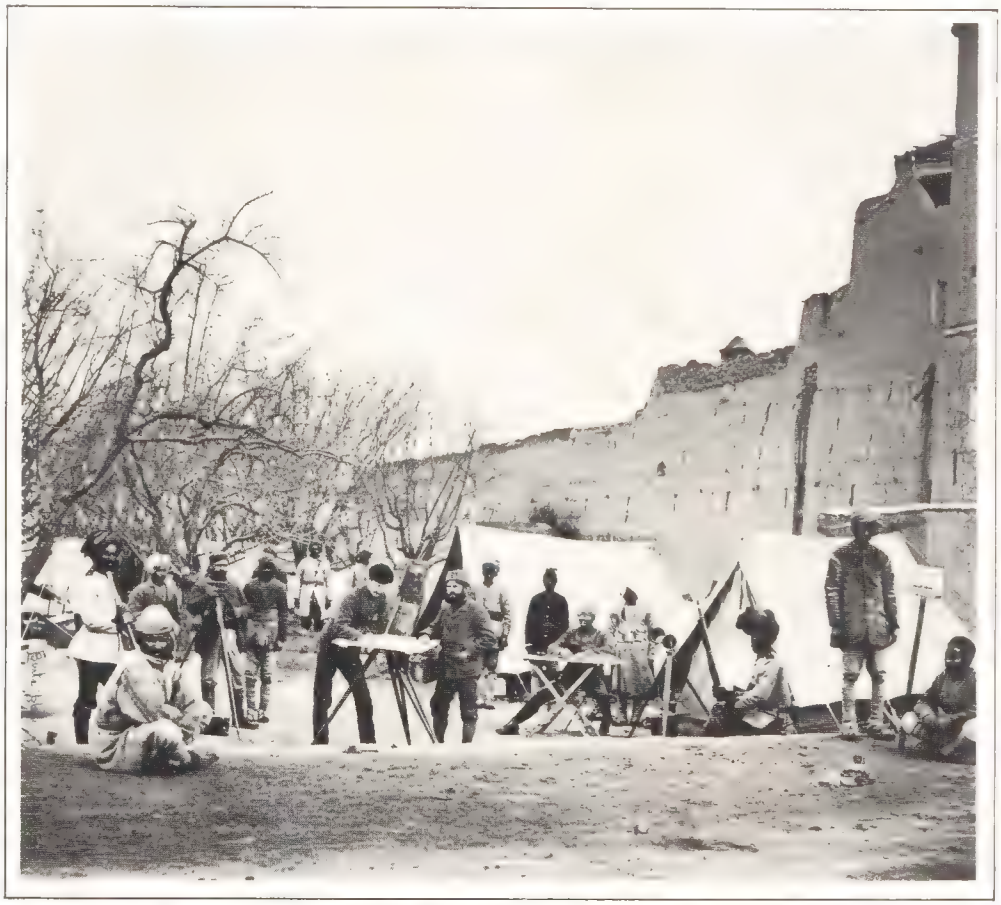
The District Commissioner of Kashmir is rowed to work in a stately craft, a perquisite of his high office.

Officers in the field relax over tea supplied by their Indian orderlies.

Keepers of the Peace

The coming of Crown rule opened new horizons of power, wealth and status to career-minded young men. The ambitious young district officer could in time become a commissioner, an under-secretary, perhaps even a statesman. The junior Army officer could hope for rapid promotion defending the frontiers of the Indian Empire. To the seasoned East India Company veterans, the newcomers were no more than idealistic schoolboys. But this idealism created a uniquely dedicated breed of administrators who energetically set about the practicalities of administering the law, planning famine relief, organizing public works and imposing peace on border areas.

District officers conduct the trial of thieves in an outlying village. The two accused men, standing on a slight rise in the background, face the wall of the hut.



The Army Engineers and Signal Corps, surveying land for a new road into the mountains of the North-West Frontier, forge another link of the Empire.

The Guardians at Ease

"Duty and red tape, picnics and adultery" – this was how one cynical writer summed up the social world of the British in India. There was certainly a feeling in some remote districts that the feverish social life in the larger Anglo-Indian centres, especially in hill stations like Poona and Simla, was less proper than it looked. There, away from the cares of day-to-day work, the usual Society pastimes multiplied. Balls and picnics, badminton and croquet, amateurish art exhibitions and the Dramatic Club – especially the Dramatic Club – were all fertile soil for scandal.

Affairs there may have been, but for most people life was more prosaic. One civil servant wrote – perhaps with a tinge of regret – that Simla ladies were "most of them pretty and all of them good."

Field-Marshal Lord Roberts of Kandahar (centre), like his subordinates, enjoyed donning period costume for theatricals.

Picnics were a popular pastime, though the formality assumed for the benefit of the cameraman was often upset by plagues of ants, flies and mosquitoes.

An amateur dramatic group indulges a taste for melodrama with a stage version of Sir Walter Scott's story, ***The Talisman***.

British guests leave a maharajah's magnificent lakeside palace for a brief trip in a steam-powered launch.

With heavy clothing, retinues of servants, elephants and lavish tables, quite ordinary people could in India assume an aristocratic way of life impossible at home.

Ladies and gentlemen displaying a wide variety of headgear exchange local gossip at an afternoon fête of parade and sport.

Polo-players compete avidly in an inter-regimental match. For most young officers, polo, in Churchill's words, was "the serious purpose of life."

Members of the Peshawar Vale Hunt, in traditional fox-hunting costume, assemble in a handsome estate for the start of a day's sport.

A Sporting Life

Sport played a great part in a social life often lacking in variety. For men, sport had wider significance: it developed the steady nerve and grit a man needed in his work. Pig-sticking, in particular, demanded the horsemanship, judgement and determination needed in times of crisis. Polo, too, was popular, especially in the Army, but it could add ruinously to the expenses of social life.

Every station had its racecourse, perhaps only a dingy ring of beaten earth with a few wooden stands for the loyal women spectators. The ladies joined the men for tennis, and for everyone there was the hunt, often in small stations a motley pack of different breeds.

A fashionably dressed horsewoman poses outside her bungalow.

Tennis- and badminton-players, complete with suits and hats, look up dutifully as the camera snaps this record of two favourite pastimes.

Officers of the 93rd Highlanders in the Deccan proudly show off some hunting trophies and some new-found pets. The wealth of

game gave Englishmen an opportunity to display a contradictory pride in themselves both as animal-killers and animal-lovers.

II. Asserting the Right to Rule

The memsahib soon learned from experienced friends and from books specially written to advise her that the trouble with servants was that "laziness, dishonesty, falsehood, with a host of other vices, seem to be inherent in them." This was, of course, not surprising considering how "they have been brought up."

There was the almost insuperable difficulty of finding out just how bad a servant was before employing him. It was all right if a personal recommendation could be obtained, but to rely on a written certificate of character was to court disaster, for if it had not been written by a "class of persons who earn their bread by writing characters for any applicant who will give them a few annas, or agree to pay a percentage should he succeed in getting the place," it had probably been inherited from a father "who, having died in the odour of sanctity, left his certificates to be divided amongst his children."

Should the memsahib be lucky and acquire tolerably honest and hard-working servants, she must still exercise constant surveillance and, above all, impose discipline. Those who did not keep strict control over their household could expect nothing but bad service and dirt in the kitchen. And dirt in the kitchen meant, in a world in which disease was rampant and prophylactic medicine at its most primitive, an increase in the already high risk of an early and unpleasant death. Some women, tartly remarked the authors of *The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook*, never went into their kitchens for the simple reason that they might have their appetite for breakfast marred by seeing a servant "using his toes as an efficient toastrack or their desire for dinner weakened by seeing the soup strained through a greasy turban."

But even if the memsahib could overcome her apprehension, how could she ensure that her orders were carried out? "The secret lies in making rules and *keeping to them*. The Indian servant is a child in everything save age, and should be treated as a child; that is to say, kindly, but with great firmness." A system of rewards and punishments should be worked out. Small fines, "beginning with one pice [a sixty-fourth of a rupee] for forgetfulness, and running up, through degrees of culpability, to one rupee [about a tenth of a servant's monthly wage] for lying" were advised. Another recommendation born out of many years' experience of Indian housekeeping was to threaten servants with a large dose of castor oil, "on the ground that there must be some physical cause for inability to learn or remember." Firmness and no toleration of impertinence were essential, "for an Indian household can no more be governed peacefully without dignity and prestige, than an Indian Empire." The paternalism of the imperialist's home was to be the paternalism of the Empire he ruled – writ small.

A properly run household of 14 indoor and outdoor servants (the minimum, as no Indian servant would do another's traditional task) took up only an hour or two of the memsahib's day, a badly run one even less. That being so, what was left to occupy her day? In the big cities with their large British communities, their hierarchies of senior civil servants, military officers, and Government House, social life could be as intense as anyone would wish. But in the hundreds of lonely stations where five or six men and women made up "Society," there were few pleasures apart from riding. There the barriers against India were low and the weapons of defence weak. There the memsahib fought her "daily battles against heat, dust, cholera, and that insidious inertia of soul and body that is the moral microbe of the East."

Under these circumstances there was literally nothing to do. The men had their work, but the women often gave in to boredom, sharing its melancholies in the evening with their husbands. During the day, with the constant excuse that the "sun was bad for her," the memsahib would often stay at home with the doors and windows closed, in semi-darkness.

This was even worse for health than venturing outside. "Half the cases of neurasthenia and anaemia among English ladies, and their inability to stand the hot weather arises," said one report, "from the fact that they live virtually in the dark." One sharp commentator on the life-style of the British in late 19th-Century India was convinced "that the forced inertia caused by living without light is responsible for many moral and physical evils among European ladies in the Tropics." It certainly contributed towards the memsahib's hatred of India

Anglo-Indians, in fashionable 1890s' attire, face the throng of Indian life from their expatriate sanctuary, a Bombay hotel.

and the Indians, as well as to that special conception of self-sacrifice with which the Victorians defended their right to rule.

The pressures of life in India were real and they fell most heavily upon the women. The men, after all, could point to achievement – a bridge built, a famine relieved, or even, though more infrequently, an injustice righted. The memsahib had no such outlets for energy against which to reckon success.

The memsahib's influence was nevertheless all-pervasive. She projected upon the great world of India not only her experience as a minor employer of Indian labour but her fears of sexual contamination, fears that reflected and reinforced the political apartheid of British and Indian. Little of this was expressed openly but it is significant that in the Anglo-Indian novel one of the recurring themes is of some loathsome fakir, personifying all the moral and emotional anarchy of India, confronting a young and innocent white woman, defiling her by his very presence. Only barely concealed sexual imagery and intimations of violence reveal the belief that "dark peoples" were always planning to advance on the citadel of white purity with the intention of rape.

The mingling of the races – the marriage between a Briton and an Indian – was always seen as a terrible miscegenation; it was not only a biological disaster, but by implication a political one.

Racial purity and political domination were considered inseparable. There was firstly the assumption that in a mixed marriage the worst of the black side will always dominate; and secondly, that however Westernized by education an Indian might appear to be, at heart he would be nothing but a sensual and superstitious native, to be considered totally unfit to share the government of his country with white men.

Fears of racial and political contamination joined with hatred of the climate and its diseases to create an emotionally charged atmosphere. Hysteria was never far beneath the surface. All that was needed was a catalyst for the fears to come tumbling out.

In 1883 such a catalyst was provided by the then Viceroy, Lord Ripon. The result was an outburst of racial hatred of unprecedented crudity and intensity.

The spark that lit the fire was a comparatively small one, a matter of criminal jurisdiction. Should Indian magistrates be permitted to try Europeans? In the major cities they had the right to do so, but everyone believed that if an Indian magistrate tried to act harshly against a European the attempt would soon be squashed. In the countryside, however, there were few Europeans and the pressure of British opinion could hardly be expected to carry as much weight as in the cities. Because of this, Indian magistrates in the countryside had not been given the power to try Europeans. It was a clear case of racial discrimination.

Lord Ripon, a Liberal, was determined to correct this injustice by passing what came to be known as the Ilbert Bill, after the Law Member of the Viceroy's Council, Sir Courtenay Ilbert.

The Viceroy did not anticipate opposition to the bill, since legal safeguards enjoyed by Europeans in India remained intact. Anyone charged with a capital offence was to be sent for trial to a High Court; and the right of appeal to a High Court against *any* conviction was confirmed. No one warned the Viceroy that there might be trouble. A day or two after the bill was announced in February, 1883, however, the Calcutta Correspondent of *The Times* reported that the government had "suddenly sprung a mine on the European community."

The members of that community, who had not been consulted over what they chose to regard as a matter of great importance to their lives, believed that there was a government conspiracy to raise up the Indian at the expense of the European. The first to react were members of the Bar, who met to organize opposition. British businessmen with interests in the countryside, in tea-gardens and indigo-plantations, immediately contributed money for a campaign against the bill. Letters were sent to Europeans resident outside Calcutta, and there was an immediate response from the planters

continued on p. 896

This list of supplies, considered by Army advisers indispensable for the young wife sailing for India, includes gingerbread nuts and a mahogany table.

Necessaries for a Lady proceeding to India.

Cot; neatly trimmed
Hair mattress and bolster
Down or feather pillow
Fine upper blankets
Common under ditto
White counterpanes
Coloured chintz quilts
Pairs of calico sheets
Pillow-cases
Set of cot curtains
Matting and screws

Shifts, made to pattern
Night ditto
Flannel petticoats
Middle ditto
Upper ditto
Coloured morning dresses
White ditto
Coloured evening dress
White ditto
White bedgowns
Corsets
Pairs of white silk stockings
Pairs of black silk stockings
Ditto white cotton ditto
Ditto silk gloves or mits
Ditto leather ditto
Ditto fashionable kid shoes
White cambric pocket handkerchiefs
Neck-handkerchiefs
Black silk dress complete
Spencers

Night-caps
Straw hats
Turbans
Caps
Yards of fine French cambric
Ditto fashionable Lenos
Ditto fine Irish linen
Ditto velvet
Ditto fine Welch flannel
Pieces of white satin ribbon
Assortment of millinery
Ditto of stationery
Towels

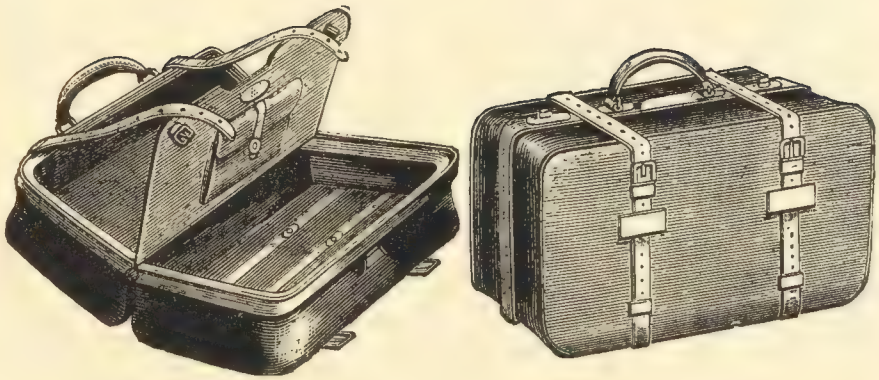
Sofa, with drawers under fitted up with curtains, to serve as a bed
Mahogany table with drawer
Wash-hand stand, with bason, &c. complete
Chairs
Yards of printed calico for lining cabin
Yards of carpeting for floor
Ditto green baize for ditto
Ditto oil cloth for ditto
Cabin Lamp
Line for fastening furniture
Brass hooks
Piano-forte
Solid mahogany writing-desk

Solid mahogany draining-box, complete
Tooth-brushes
Nail ditto
Hair ditto
Comb ditto
Tortoise-shell dress combs
Small tooth ditto
Pounds of Windsor soap
Bottles of Lavender water
Ditto of Arquebusade
Small looking-glass with slider
Pounds of wax candles
Flat candlestick, snuffers, &c.
Boxes of tooth powder
Pairs of scissars
Penknives
Pocket book
Quarter chests of oranges
Boxes of Le Mann's biscuits
Pints of raspberry vinegar
Ditto capillaire
Pound pots of raspberry jam
Ditto currant jelly
Ditto strawberry jam
Pounds of gingerbread nuts
Ditto portable soup
Ditto chocolate
Dozens of Bristol water
Black leather trunks

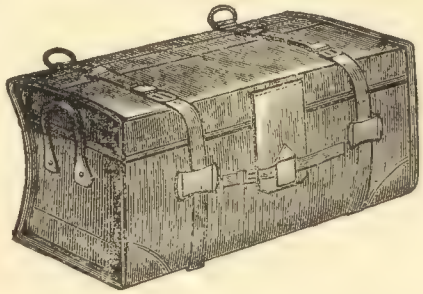
THE STORES

In 1871, a group of Army and Navy officers formed a non-profit-making organization – the Army and Navy Stores, whose crest appears above – to cater cheaply to their own special needs.

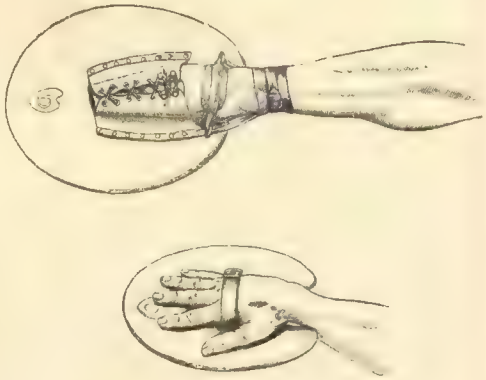
The Stores, from whose catalogue these illustrations were taken, fulfilled all the functions of an imperial club. The doormen addressed members by name and high standards of dress and decorum were required. Membership was vital to officers and their families travelling to India. At the turn of the century, branches opened in Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta and Karachi.



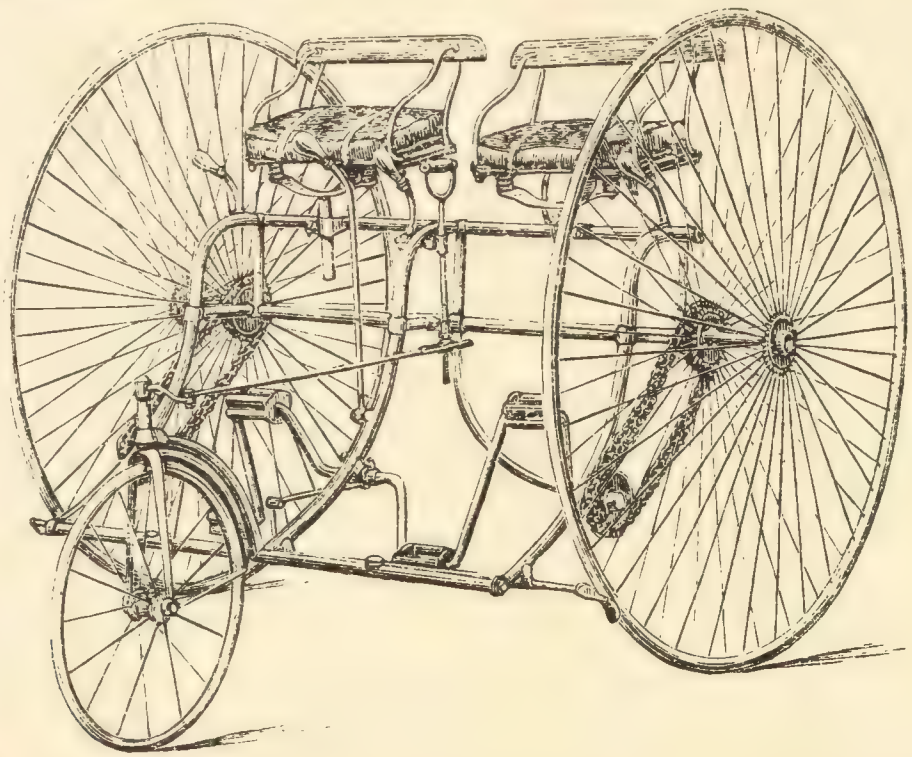
Gladstone-bags, the light travelling-cases named in the 1880s after the Prime Minister, could be bought for 27*s.* 6*d.*, but a *de luxe* version, leather lined was priced at £3.



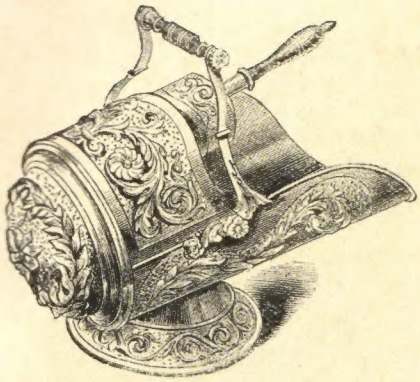
This mule-pannier was personally recommended by Sir Garnet Wolseley, hero of countless imperial wars. Made of canvas stretched tight over a cane framework, it cost £4. 5. 0.



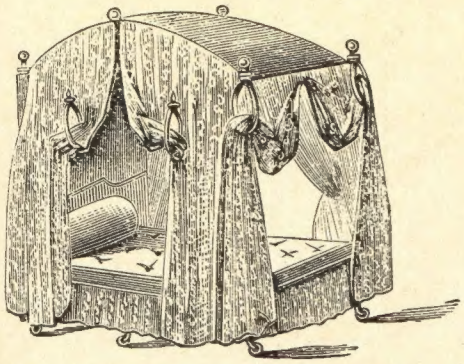
These forerunners of flippers were called "Swimming Plates." Made of walnut, they gave, ran the catalogue, "marvellous float and diving power, endurance and speed. . . . Their success is certified to by eminent swimmers, and they are favourably commented on by the leading papers."



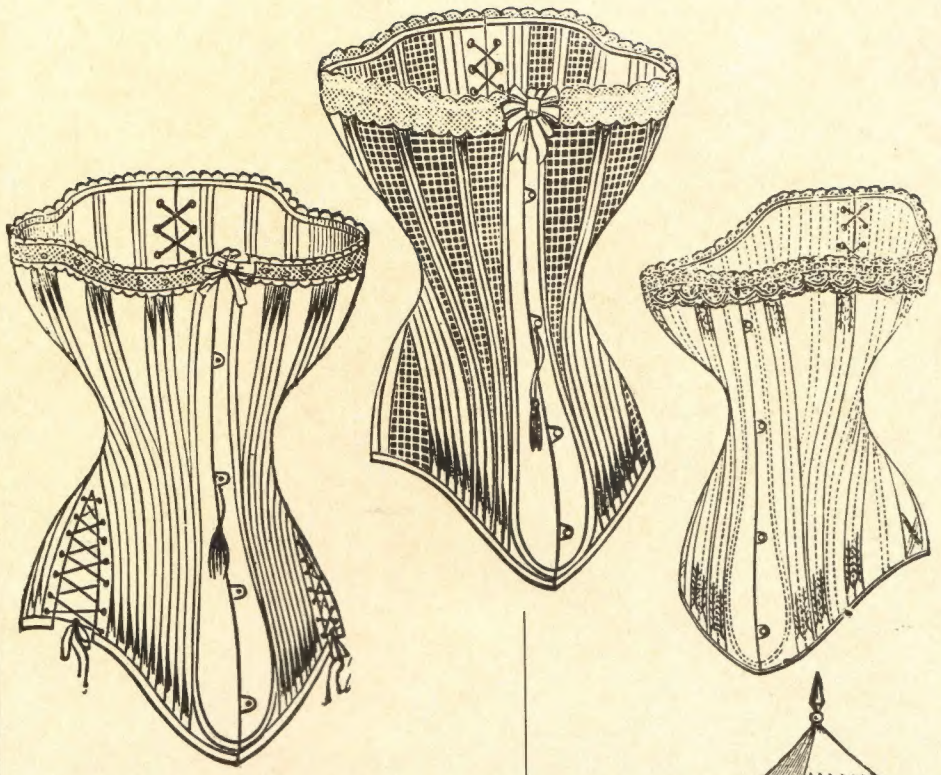
"The 'Club' Sociable" was an enormous tricycle available in eight models from the Gun Department. "This is a machine of quite new construction for the present season. It is distinguished for its lightness, elegance, and efficient brake power. The speed attainable is very considerable, and with two good riders a very big record may be made. Price £21. 5. 0."



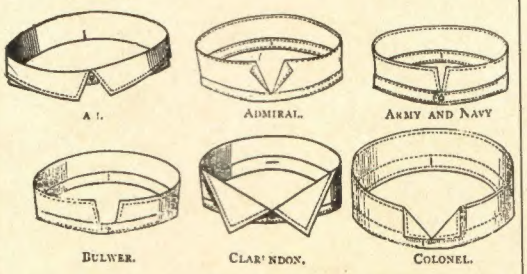
The "Connaught" coal-scoop, offered at about £2, was for home use only.



A folding-bed must have pleased Victorian travellers who could not bear a total break with middle-class habits. This monster cost 11 guineas, and came complete with an iron-bound container, horse-hair mattress, feather pillow, a "Brown Waterproof Mail Canvas Valise" for the bedding, and six-wheeled canvas-hung iron bedstead.



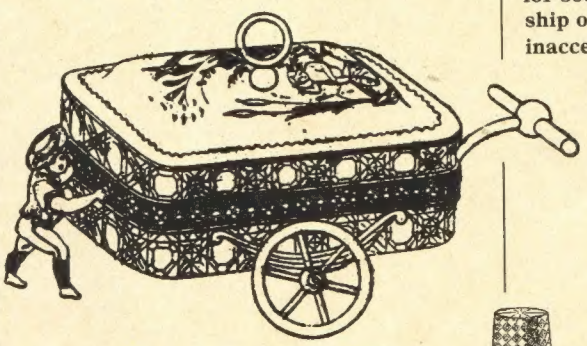
Corsets that thrust busts forward and bottoms backward helped wilting memsahibs to preserve a suitably imperious bearing.



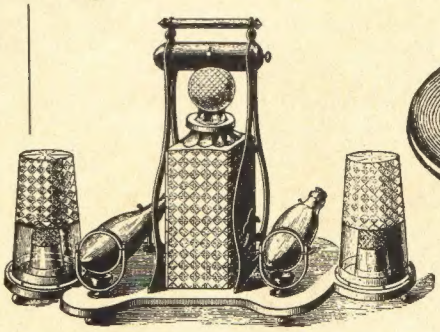
Collars like these – including one of The Stores' own design (top right) – were vital for social appearances at home, on board ship or in even the most hideously inaccessible Indian outpost.

The "Lucknow" Crusader-style tent came at 48*s.* 9*d.* in brown, and 61*s.* 6*d.* in striped cloth.

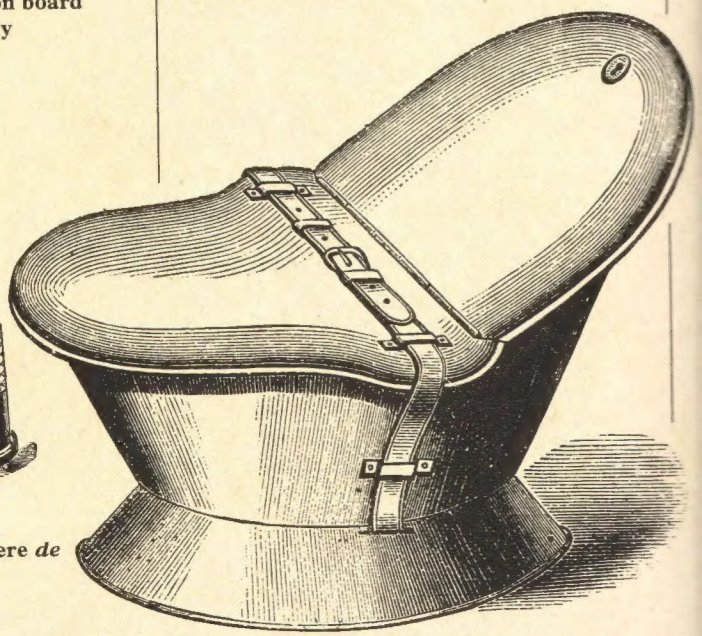
This travelling bath-tub, complete with lock and strap for transportation, was known as an "Athenian" and cost about £1 13*s.*



An electroplated sardine box at 36*s.* would have seemed an over-priced luxury.



Brandy decanter and soda siphons were *de rigueur* for a spell in the tropics.



who, more than anyone else, feared the coming of Indian magistrates who might try to put a stop to the beatings they were used to giving to "their own niggers." At meetings of planters, it was made quite clear that the first Indian magistrate who had the misfortune to try a European would find himself clapped in his own gaol – if nothing worse.

Support came in not only from planters, merchants and lawyers, but also from many officials who were disturbed at the liberal trend of Ripon's policies. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal openly opposed the bill. The Chief Justice and ten British judges of the Calcutta court endorsed the agitation. The influential newspaper, *The Englishman*, which printed inflammatory comments, responded in a harsh and threatening manner to the justifiable irritation that was shown by the Indian-owned Press as British agitation mounted, "We are on the eve of a crisis," declared *The Englishman*, "which will try the power of the British Government in a way in which it has not been tried since the Mutiny" 26 years before.

At a large protest meeting held by British residents in Calcutta Town Hall, angry speeches were made denouncing the bill. A leading lawyer warned his fellow countrymen to beware of "the wily natives who creep in where you cannot walk, because you cannot walk unless you walk upright." It was Indians, he said, who now had the ear of the Viceroy and poisoned it with lies.

The audience, roused to a high pitch of hysteria, founded a Defence Association to protect its interests. From the floor came all manner of extremist sentiments. In fact, one who had attended the meeting found nothing either odd or silly in opening a letter to the Press some time later with the lines: "The only people who have any right to India are the British. The *so-called* Indians have no right whatever."

The favourite bugaboo of sexual danger, never very far below the surface in colonial society, was also given renewed attention. The general impression was put about that if an Englishwoman was brought up before an Indian magistrate she would probably find herself in the magistrate's harem. In the hope of arousing sympathy in Britain, the editor of one paper, the unconsciously ironically titled *Friend of India*, wrote: "Would you like to live in a country where at any moment your wife would be liable to be sentenced on a false charge, the magistrate being a copper-coloured Pagan?"

Britain seemed little concerned. The indifference of the British government even brought the suggestion that India should secede from Britain!

Throughout the hot season the Viceroy had, of course, been at Simla. When he returned to Calcutta in December, 1883, he was booed in the streets. There was even a conspiracy to overpower the guards at Government House, kidnap the Viceroy, and place him forcibly on board a ship for England.

The Viceroy's advisers were now strongly opposed to the bill. There were reports from the Criminal Intelligence Department that many planters were planning to come to Calcutta for a monster demonstration, and that there might be violence. As there were only 70 European police in Calcutta and to use Indian police would only be inflammatory, there seemed no alternative to calling the Army out. But to use European troops against Europeans was unthinkable.

Under such a combination of pressures, Ripon gave in. Negotiations were opened with the leaders of the non-official community, and what was called "a compromise" was arrived at: a European could always, when confronted by an Indian magistrate, demand to be tried by jury, half of which had to be white.

The rationale for British rule had once again been upheld, and there were many ready to proclaim the virtues of this rationale – more, in fact, as time wore on. In 1901, the Liberal statesman, historian and authority on law, James Bryce, summed up the Raj in these words: "Three things the career of the English in India has proved. One is, that it is possible for a European to rule a subject race on principles of strict justice, restraining the natural propensity of the stronger to abuse their power. . . . The second is that a relatively small body of European civilians, supported by a relatively small armed force, can maintain peace and order in an immense population on a lower plane of civilisation. . . . The third fact is that the existence of a system securing these benefits is compatible with an absolute separation between the rulers and the ruled."

Such bombast was reinforced by the Anglo-Indians themselves, whose self-proclaimed virtues were designed to excite the adulation of the British at home. The virtues, displayed like a peacock's tail by the rulers of British India, were the masculine ones of duty and sacrifice, "the sturdy self-control, the patient persistent driving force that have made the country what it is today."

Though the qualities of the men were perhaps disguised behind a "surface of muteness and officialdom," and those of the women behind complaints about prices and servants, the British community was convinced of its remarkable character. Its members saw themselves as a "little concentrated band of . . . men and women, pursuing their own ends; magnificently unmindful of alien eyes watching, speculating, misunderstanding at every turn; the whole heterogeneous mass drawn and held together by the universal love of hazard and sport, the spirit of competition without strife that is the cornerstone of the British character and the British Empire."

It was an impressive claim, one which was made more and more strongly in reply to critics in Britain who, as the 19th Century drew to its close, became more and more articulate. Against accusations of levity, laziness, and isolation from the real India, Anglo-Indians claimed a superiority in guts, endurance and generosity.

By such statements and beliefs, separation between rulers and ruled, arising originally out of distaste and fear, became sanctified and seemingly immutable.

But long before the end of the century, forces were gathering that were to destroy the brittle, shallow, high-minded, remote world of Anglo-India. In the last days of 1883, as the British were celebrating the defeat of the Ilbert Bill, the Indians in Calcutta were holding their first National Conference. And two years later in Bombay there was held the first meeting of the Indian National Congress, which over half a century later was to lead India to her independence from British rule.

Officers, 7th Royal Fusiliers, 1855